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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
MONDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2003

THIS REPORT WILL PRESENT A TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER
THREE THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

US wants Cyprus talks resumed before January 28 - Hurriyet
12/21
American Soldier 'Person of the Year' - Time - Milliyet
12/21
Barzani implies a 'Greater Kurdistan' - Milliyet 12/21
Barzani: Kirkuk is historically ours - Sabah
Barzani claims Kirkuk - Turkiye
After Libya, eyes now on Syria - Hurriyet
Qadafi betrays bin-Ladin - Sabah
Qadafi gives in - Hurriyet 12/21
Bremer: Saddam was nervous, arrogant - Turkiye

OPINION MAKERS

Kurds' goal unification - Radikal 12/21
Kurds' government plans disturb Ankara - Cumhuriyet
Libya to become a close ally of the West - Radikal
Qadafi softens - Yeni Safak 12/21
Israel might strike Iran's nuclear plants - Zaman
Tehran Israel's No. 1 target - Cumhuriyet
Bush wants to get rid of Arafat - Cumhuriyet
Wesley Clark testifies against Milosevic - Yeni Safak 12/21

BRIEFING

Iraq: Monday's papers highlight KDP leader Barzani's statement claiming that Kurds have 'historical rights' to Kirkuk. The KDP and PUK will launch a joint initiative for establishing a coalition government in Northern Iraq, according to weekend papers. Dailies regard this move as an initial step towards a Kurdish state. Five Kurdish members of the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) have submitted a bill to establish a federal Iraq based on ethnicity. The MFA is expected to give the Embassy a message about Turkey's concerns about the protection of Iraq's territorial integrity. The US supports the notion of limited Kurdish autonomy, according to "Cumhuriyet."

Cyprus: Prime Minister Erdogan agrees with the UNSC call for resuming Cyprus peace negotiations within the framework of the Annan plan. Sunday's "Cumhuriyet" quotes Denktas as saying that entering into negotiations under the Annan Plan would mean losing Cyprus. The paper blames Erdogan and Foreign Minister Gul for weakening the position of Turkish Cypriots. President Sezer is expected to hold a 'Cyprus summit' with Turkish government leaders and Denktas following the formation of a new government in the TRNC. The US Administration has stepped up pressure on Ankara for resuming talks under the Annan Plan in advance of Prime Minister Erdogan's Washington visit on January 28, 2004. US sources have lost hope of making progress with Denktas, "Hurriyet" reports. US Special Cyprus Coordinator Thomas Weston called for rapid and intensive negotiations once a new government is formed in the TRNC. Ankara has promised Weston to convince Denktas, and has urged the US to exert pressure on the Greek Cypriots.

Turkey, Israel to sign cooperation agreement: On his visit

to Turkey this week, Israel's interior security minister Tzahi Hanegbi will sign with Turkish officials a security agreement to combat international organized crime, human and narcotics trafficking, and smuggling. Israeli industry and trade minister Ehud Olmert is expected in Turkey in January, and foreign minister Gul will visit Israel in February.

EDITORIAL OPINION: EU expansion/Cyprus

"Talks Should Be Based on the Annan Plan"

Washington-based Yasemin Congar wrote in the mass appeal Milliyet (12/22): "Washington interpreted the result of the Turkish Cypriot elections as hope and change prevailing over fear and the status quo. An American diplomat noted that the Turkish Cypriot opposition party won a larger percentage of the vote than Turkey's ruling AKP during the 2002 elections in Turkey. . The election result effectively passes the ball to Ankara. Everyone in Washington who deals with the Cyprus issue agrees that Ankara's responsibility for reaching a settlement process has increased after the elections. . US officials underline the importance of the Annan Plan for the settlement process, and state that 'any proposal other than the Annan Plan will not be a way to restart the negotiations. Any solution package from Turkey that does not take the Annan Plan as a starting point will come to naught.' And everyone who deals with Turkey and Cyprus in Washington is looking at the calendar and urging that a solution be found by May 2004. Everyone warns that time is running against Turkey on this issue."

"Does the Turkish Government Have a Cyprus Policy?"

Semih Idiz criticized in the mass appeal Aksam (12/22): "The Turkish Cypriot elections did not advance the process for a solution and Cyprus. They have instead led to more controversy, particularly within Turkey. It remains to be seen how the Turkish Cypriots will eventually establish internal stability, given the deadlock in the election results and the fact that they have a president who is not impartial. . Yet the real problem is with the Turkish government. The AKP government has so far presented us with a series of inconsistencies. PM Erdogan began by saying 'we are not going to be part of the status quo in Cyprus.' But today, he seems to be doing his best to keep up with the status quo rhetoric. It is not only Tom Weston who is confused -- we are all confused. Finding the real Cyprus policy of this government is like a riddle. Turkey is supposedly working on a Cyprus initiative. We all know that such an initiative must please UNSG Annan if Turkey is really after a settlement. This, of course, would be very unpleasant for Denktas."

EDELMAN